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Senate Rules Panel Will Begin Closed Dodd Hearings June 20

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WASHINGTON, June 2 — The Senate Rules Committee announced today that it would begin closed hearings on June 20 into allegations of official misconduct by Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut.

The committee is considering a sweeping series of charges against Senator Dodd published since last January by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, the Washington columnists. They have reported that their allegations of misconduct, involving Mr. Dodd's contacts with lobbyists and businessmen and the Senator's handling of campaign contributions, were based on copies of documents taken from the Senator's office files.

Open hearings in the first phase of what may be a prolonged series of investigatory sessions are expected to follow in about a week. It was learned that both the committee and Senator Dodd expected the closed sessions to last no more than two or three days—a week at the most.

In that case, the closed hearings—required under the committee's rules—could then be followed by open sessions starting about June 27.

The brief announcement by the six-member, bipartisan committee—officially known as the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct—came at the end of a day of negotiations over the starting date between the committee and Senator Dodd and his lawyers.

The statement said, for the first time publicly, that the ethics committee "is continuing to pursue its inquiry into other phases of Senator Dodd's activities."

The long-delayed hearings were the outgrowth of a request for an ethics committee investigation made last February by Mr. Dodd after publication of the first seven of more than 30

daily Pearson-Anderson columns that alleged a variety of official improprieties by the 59-year-old Senator from North Stonington, Conn.

Senator Dodd's request was based on charges by the columnists that he had improperly sought to promote the private interests of Julius Klein, a Chicago public relations man with a \$150,000-a-year contract to represent in this country a group of West German industrialists, bankers and Government officials.

Senator Dodd is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Klein, a retired Army Reserve major general, is registered with the Justice Department as a foreign agent on his West German clients.

When the committee announced on March 25 that it would hold public hearings on the columnists' Dodd-Klein allegations "as soon as Senator Dodd has had time to prepare his defense," it said it was specifically limiting its investigation to those questions.

The announcement today indirectly confirmed reports that the committee intends to investigate other allegations by the columnists, particularly their contention, published during March and April, that Senator Dodd converted tax-free campaign contributions to his own use.

On May 6, the Senator filed a \$5-million libel and conspiracy suit against Mr. Pearson and Mr. Anderson, seeking damages for most of their "false and malicious" allegations and for their "inducement" of his former employees to convey copies of his office files to them.

On May 26, however, Senator Dodd dropped all but four of the original 14 counts in his libel and conspiracy complaint, leaving intact the conspiracy charge against the columnists and the assertion that all of their columns relating to Mr. Klein were "false, malicious and defamatory."